

AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

TITLE: ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER GRANT PROGRAM

ACTION: Request for Applications (RFA)

RFA NUMBER: EPA-OCFO-CEF-15

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NO: 66.203

DATES: The closing date and time for receipt of applications pursuant to this notice is **April 30, 2015 at 4:30 PM, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)**. Electronic submissions must be submitted electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) by **April 30, 2015 at 4:30 PM. (EDT)**. Applications of any type received after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding. **See Section IV for further submission information.**

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of funds and solicits applications from eligible entities for regional Environmental Finance Centers (EFCs) that provide multi-media environmental finance expertise and outreach to regulated communities (e.g., states, tribes, local governments, and private sector entities) to help them meet environmental requirements. The objective is to help the regulated parties in these communities find effective and innovative ways to help address the growing costs of protecting public health and the environment in a sustainable and equitable manner. Under this program, EFC's will be established and supported in EPA regions across the nation to provide regulated parties with finance-related training, technical assistance, finance studies, and other analytical support (eligible services) to help them develop sustainable solutions to the critical "how-to-pay" issues associated with meeting environmental standards and goals. These regional EFCs will educate regulated parties on lowering costs, increasing investments, improving financial capacity, encouraging full cost pricing, and identifying and evaluating financing options.

FUNDING/AWARDS: The total estimated funding available under this competitive opportunity shall not exceed \$48 million for the six-year period, FY 2016-2021. In FY 2016, total estimated funding shall not exceed \$8 million. For FY 2016, the annual value of each cooperative agreement from this competitive opportunity will depend on the number of awards made. All cooperative agreements will be funded in annual increments in subsequent years subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory performance, and other applicable considerations.

EPA will seek to award at least one cooperative agreement in each EPA region under this competitive announcement, subject to the quality of applications received and the availability of funds. Applicants may apply for and receive, if successful, only one cooperative agreement covering one EPA region under this announcement. Furthermore, while EPA will seek to achieve the broadest possible coverage of EFC services across the nation, there is no guarantee that there will be an award for each EPA region.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

While the nation has made significant investments and progress in addressing environmental and public health needs over the past forty years, more remains to be done. Not only does the nation still face many environmental challenges such as water and air pollution, solid and hazardous waste clean-up and disposal, ecosystem protection needs and suburban sprawl, it also faces the problem of how to pay for the growing costs of the facilities, programs, services, and activities needed to meet these and other environmental challenges on a sustainable basis. In addition, these environmental and financing challenges are occurring at a time when budgets at all levels of government are facing increasing pressures, and problems in the financial markets are constraining needed sources of capital. EPA recognizes that existing environmental gains cannot be preserved nor further progress achieved unless the regulated communities (State and local governments, tribes, and the private sector) find ways to pay for the growing costs of protecting the environment and public health.

The objectives sought to be attained through the awards under this RFA relate to the EPA's recognition that supporting the capacity of state, tribal, and local governments and the private sector to meet the costs of their environmental and public health responsibilities is critical to the success of the Agency's mission. The EPA further recognizes that given the trends of growing costs and increasing resource pressures, the need to support the environmental work of regulated communities through vehicles such as the regional Environment Finance Centers (EFCs) is as important and timely as ever. The EFCs provide state, tribal, and local governments and private sector parties with eligible services to develop their capacity to protect human health and the environment. The EFCs pursue this work using specialized expertise in environmental finance and management and through cooperation and collaborative partnerships with other EFCs, regulated parties, regulators, other universities, technical assistance providers, and non-profit organizations throughout the U.S. The EFCs are expected to use their expertise, resources, and partnerships to provide eligible services for environmental finance projects in the EPA regions, as appropriate.

B. Project Overview and Scope of Work

The EPA is soliciting applications from eligible entities to support the operations of regional Environmental Finance Centers (EFCs) located across the country in providing eligible services to parties in the regulated communities (e.g., state and local governments and the private sector). EFCs will work with state, tribal, and local governments and private sector entities to help them address the growing costs of environmental protection. EFCs will assist these regulated parties develop solutions to the difficult “how-to- pay” issues associated with meeting environmental standards and goals.

Under the cooperative agreements, regional EFCs will assist the regulated communities in lowering the costs of environmental protection, increasing environmental investments, improving/expanding financial capacity, supporting responsible asset management, encouraging the use of full-cost pricing and improving environmental financing options. A central goal of the EFCs will be to create environmentally and financially sustainable systems. Such systems should have the financial, technical and institutional resources and capabilities to operate in compliance with environmental requirements and in conformance with accepted environmental practices over the long term. EFCs will focus on helping regulated parties find ways to finance their environmental protection and public health responsibilities in ways that promote and ensure environmental justice.

Specific types of EFC eligible services that the successful applicants should provide include, but are not limited to, developing training courses, delivering educational presentations on infrastructure development and management, holding finance-focused, community-based workshops, providing training on how to build public-private partnerships, conducting environmental justice finance-related training, providing expertise and analytical support for public information and involvement efforts, developing computer planning and finance models, and sharing and marketing environmental finance tools. In addition to training activities, EFCs should develop and share environmental financing information through research reports, videos, case studies, best practices and how-to guides, models, computer software, and direct consultations.

Examples of environmental finance-related priorities that applicants for these regional EFC grants are encouraged to address in their applications and then provide to the regulated communities (e.g., state, tribal, and local officials and private businesses) via eligible services if they receive an award include:

1. building the capacity of communities and private parties to develop, implement, and support sustainable public-purpose water and other environmental infrastructure systems;
2. providing computer-based and other financial and outreach tools to communities (particularly small and disadvantaged ones) to help them more effectively manage watersheds and water systems;
3. supporting cleaner/greener business through source reduction, pollution

- prevention, conservation, resource recovery, reuse, and recycling (sustainable materials management);
4. promoting environmentally sustainable development, redevelopment, smart growth and land use planning; green infrastructure approaches; and green building efforts by state and local governments and the private sector;
 5. supporting environmentally and fiscally sustainable environmental infrastructure, including ensuring the resiliency and security of that infrastructure;
 6. supporting wetlands programs and protection;
 7. improving drinking water and wastewater utility water conservation, energy efficiency, management, and capital planning;
 8. encouraging green jobs and green business products and services;
 9. promoting innovative ways to finance and otherwise support interstate, state, regional, and local air pollution reduction efforts;
 10. reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and developing decision tools and financial strategies for adaptation to adverse weather events and/or climate change.;
 11. improving water quality and quantity (includes aquifer recharge),
 12. evaluating the feasibility of attracting non-federal public and private resources to water infrastructure and other environmental projects;
 13. assisting the owners and operators of small, medium, and disadvantaged environmental systems in planning, developing, and obtaining financing for infrastructure projects;
 14. developing fiscal sustainability plans for utilities that include inventories of critical assets, evaluations asset performance, energy conservation efforts, operations, maintenance and repair needs and activities, and any required certifications;
 15. reducing and mitigating stormwater runoff from public and private facilities and properties, and developing systems to fund and finance stormwater activities;
 16. encouraging the development and use of public-private partnerships, where appropriate in providing environmental services, infrastructure, projects, and activities;
 17. developing, identifying, and marketing innovative financing approaches as well as successful traditional approaches such as the state clean water and drinking water revolving fund loan programs; and
 18. identifying, supporting and advancing environmental equity and justice concerns, where appropriate, in all trainings, outreach, projects, programs, and activities.

EPA will not fund projects which seek to provide research training and technical assistance to facilitate the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation. EPA funds these activities in competitions conducted under Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 66.814, Brownfields Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program.

C. EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs

1. Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan. Tasks under the awards expected under this RFA will support the following goals in the EPA Strategic Plan:

Goal 1	Addressing Climate Change and Improving Air Quality
Goal 2	Protecting America's Waters
Goal 3	Cleaning Up Communities and Advancing Sustainable Development
Goal 4	Ensuring the Safety of Chemicals and Preventing Pollution
Goal 5	Protecting Human Health and the Environment by Enforcing Laws and Assuring Compliance

The EPA Strategic Plan also sets forth the following four cross-agency strategies which set clear expectations for changing the way EPA does business in achieving its results:

- Working Toward a Sustainable Future
- Working to Make a Visible Difference in Communities
- Launching a New Era of State, Tribal, Local, and International Partnerships
- Embracing EPA as a High-Performing Organization

Applications must demonstrate how the proposed project will support all of these goals. Detailed information on EPA's Strategic Plan, may be found on the EPA website at: <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>. Detailed information on EPA's Cross-Agency Strategies may be found on the Agency's website at: <http://www2.epa.gov/planandbudget/fy-2015-cross-agency-strategies-action-plans>.

2. Outputs. The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Expected outputs from the project(s) to be funded under this announcement may include: the development and implementation of environmental finance training courses, on-line environmental finance information exchanges and forums, computerized models and software tools focused on paying for environmental protection, case studies, and direct consultations, all related to environmental finance. It is expected that these outputs will be provided to state, tribal, and local governments, and the private sector as appropriate. Progress reports and a final report will also be a required output, as specified in Section VI(C) of this announcement, "Reporting Requirement."

3. **Outcomes.** The term “outcome” means the result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, but must be quantitative. They may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period.

Projects to be funded under this announcement are expected to produce at least one, and preferably all, of the following environmental outcomes: States, Tribes, local communities, and private sector parties will create more sustainable environmental financing systems covering all environmental and public health media and these systems will have the financial, technical, and institutional resources and capabilities to operate in compliance with environmental requirements and in conformance with accepted environmental practices over the long term. EPA anticipates that improved compliance with regulations and practices will further all five of EPA’s strategic plan goals listed above under Section I.C.1 and located on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

D. Supplementary Information

The statutory authorities for this action are: the Clean Water Act, Section 104,(b)(3), as amended; the Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442(b)(3) and Section 1420(g), as amended; the Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001(a); the Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3); the Toxics Substances Control Act, Section 10, as amended; the Federal Insecticide, the Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, Section 20, as amended; and the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, Section 203.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. What is the amount of funding available?

The total estimated funding available for awards made under this competitive opportunity over the six year period from FY 2016 to FY 2021 shall not exceed \$48 million. In FY 2016, total funding for all awards made, however many that may be, shall not exceed \$8 million, and the annual value of each cooperative agreement from this competitive opportunity will depend on the availability of funds and the number of awards made.

B. Partial Funding

Under the appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a project, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicant or affect the basis upon which the application or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

C. How many agreements will EPA award in this competition?

While EPA will seek to achieve the broadest possible coverage of EFC eligible services across the nation, the number of applications that EPA awards under this announcement/competition will depend on the number and quality of the applications received and evaluated.

Within this context, EPA will seek to award at least one cooperative agreement in each EPA region subject to the quality of applications received, availability of funds, number of awards made, and other applicable considerations. EPA reserves the right to reject all applications and make no award as a result of this announcement or to make fewer than ten awards. EPA further reserves the right to fund no awards in a region. If additional funding becomes available after the original selections, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy. Additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months from the date of original selections.

D. What is the project period for awards resulting from this solicitation?

The estimated project period for awards resulting from this competitive solicitation is October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2021. All project activities must be completed within negotiated activity performance periods within this overall project period.

E. Funding Type

The funding for selected projects will be provided in the form of a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements permit substantial involvement between the EPA Project Officers and the selected applicants in the performance of the work supported. Although regional EPA offices will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for this project will include:

- in accordance with 2 CFR 317 and 2 CFR 318, as appropriate, review of proposed procurement;
- approving the qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient);

- participation in planning meetings;
- consultations when problems or difficulties are encountered;
- collaboration during the performance of the scope of work;
- close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant; and
- review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities

In accordance with CFDA 66.203, applications will be accepted from public and private non-profit universities and colleges and non-profit organizations subject to 2 CFR Part 200 (as applicable). Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Non-profit organization, as defined by 2 CFR Part 200.70, means any corporation, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including Institutions of Higher Education, that: (a) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (b) is not organized primarily for profit; and (c) uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

To be eligible for funding under this announcement, an educational institution must be public (e.g. state, tribal, or municipal colleges and universities) or a private college or university that is recognized by a governmental body as a non-profit or not-for-profit entity. Proprietary, commercial or other "for profit" schools, colleges or universities are not eligible to apply for funding under this announcement.

EPA invites eligible applicants from all regions of the country and hopes that ones with a wide range of experience and background will apply. In this regard, the Agency encourages historically black colleges and universities, tribal universities, and community colleges to apply for funding under this announcement or to partner with another eligible applicant.

Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No matching funds are required under this competition. Although cost-sharing/matching is

not required as a condition of eligibility under this competition, under Section V of this announcement EPA will evaluate proposals based on a leveraging criterion.

Leveraging is generally when an applicant proposes to provide its own additional funds/resources or those from third party sources to support or complement the project they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA grant funds awarded. Any leveraged funds/resources, and their source, must be identified in the proposal (See Section IV of the announcement). Leveraged funds and resources may take various forms as noted below.

Voluntary cost share is a form of leveraging. Voluntary cost sharing is when an applicant voluntarily proposes to legally commit to provide costs or contributions to support the project when a cost share is not required. Applicants who propose to use a voluntary cost share **must** include the costs or contributions for the voluntary cost share in the project budget on the SF-424. If an applicant proposes a voluntary cost share, the following apply:

- A voluntary cost share is subject to the match provisions in the grant regulations at 2 CFR 200.306.
- A voluntary cost share may only be met with eligible and allowable costs.
- The recipient may not use other sources of federal funds to meet a voluntary cost share unless the statute authorizing the other federal funding provides that the federal funds may be used to meet a cost share requirement on a federal grant.
- The recipient is legally obligated to meet any proposed voluntary cost share that is included in the approved project budget. If the proposed voluntary cost share does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by 2 CFR Part 200.338.

Other leveraged funding/resources that are not identified as a voluntary cost share—this form of leveraging may be met by funding from another federal grant, from an applicant's own resources, or resources from other third party sources. This form of leveraging should not be included in the budget and the costs need not be eligible and allowable project costs under the EPA assistance agreement. While this form of leveraging should not be included in the budget, the grant workplan should include a statement indicating that the applicant is expected to produce the proposed leveraging consistent with the terms of the announcement and the applicant's proposal. If applicants propose to provide this form of leveraging, EPA expects them to make the effort to secure the leveraged resources described in their proposals. If the proposed leveraging does not materialize during grant performance, then EPA may reconsider the legitimacy of the award and/or take other appropriate action as authorized by CFR Part 200.338. Examples of in-kind resource contributions may include, but are not limited to, low overhead/indirect cost rates (below 50%), pro-bono contributions from environmental finance experts, the use of unpaid/low-cost interns and students with specialized skills, and direct resource contributions.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that if not met by the time of application submission will result in elimination of the application from consideration for funding. Only applications from eligible entities (see above) that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1.
 - a. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application or parts thereof (e.g., narrative proposal), pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
 - b. In addition, initial applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed for as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely submitted.
 - c. Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with Grants.gov or relevant SAM.gov system issues. An applicant's failure to timely submit their application through Grants.gov because they did not timely or properly register in SAM.gov or Grants.gov will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission. Applicants should confirm receipt of their applications with the Agency Contact, **Timothy McProuty**, as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.
2. Applications must demonstrate how the proposed project will support all five Goals and cross-cutting strategies contained in the current EPA Strategic Plan:

Goal 1	Addressing Climate Change and Improving Air Quality
Goal 2	Protecting America's Waters

- Goal 3 Cleaning Up Communities and Advancing Sustainable Development
- Goal 4 Ensuring the Safety of Chemicals and Preventing Pollution
- Goal 5 Protecting Human Health and the Environment by Enforcing Laws and Assuring Compliance

- Working Toward a Sustainable Future
- Working to Make a Visible Difference in Communities
- Launching a New Era of State, Tribal, Local, and International Partnerships
- Embracing EPA as a High-Performing Organization

3. Projects which seek funding to provide research training and technical assistance to facilitate the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, the remediation of brownfield sites, community involvement, or site preparation are not eligible for consideration under this announcement.
4. Applicants may submit only one application covering one EPA region under this competitive announcement. Only one award covering one EPA region may be made to an individual applicant under this competitive announcement.
5. Ineligible activities: If a proposal is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the proposal will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the proposal, render the entire proposal ineligible for funding.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Requirement to Submit Through Grants.gov and Limited Exception Procedures

Applicants, except as noted below, must apply electronically through Grants.gov under this funding opportunity based on the grants.gov instructions in this announcement. If an applicant does not have the technical capability to apply electronically through grants.gov because of limited or no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials to Grants.gov, the applicant must contact OGDWaivers@epa.gov or the address listed below in writing (e.g., by hard copy, email) at least 15 calendar days prior to the submission deadline under this announcement to request approval to submit their application materials through an alternate method.

Mailing Address:

OGD Waivers
c/o Barbara Perkins
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N. W.
Mail Code: 3903R
Washington, DC 20460

Courier Address:
OGD Waivers
c/o Barbara Perkins
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Rm # 51267
Washington, DC 20004

In the request, the applicant must include the following information:

Funding Opportunity Number (FON)

Organization Name and DUNS

Organization's Contact Information (email address and phone number)

Explanation of how they lack the technical capability to apply electronically through Grants.gov because of 1) limited internet access or 2) no internet access which prevents them from being able to upload the required application materials through www.Grants.gov.

EPA will only consider alternate submission exception requests based on the two reasons stated above and will timely respond to the request -- all other requests will be denied. If an alternate submission method is approved, the applicant will receive documentation of this approval and further instructions on how to apply under this announcement. Applicants will be required to submit the documentation of approval with any initial application submitted under the alternative method. In addition, any submittal through an alternative method must comply with all applicable requirements and deadlines in the announcement including the submission deadline and requirements regarding proposal content and page limits (although the documentation of approval of an alternate submission method will not count against any page limits).

If an exception is granted, it is valid for submissions to EPA for the remainder of the entire calendar year in which the exception was approved and can be used to justify alternative submission methods for application submissions made through December 31 of the calendar year in which the exception was approved (e.g., if the exception was approved on March 1, 2015, it is valid for any competitive or non-competitive application submission to EPA through December 31, 2015). Applicants need only request an exception once in a calendar year and all exceptions will expire on December 31 of that calendar year. Applicants must request a new exception from required electronic submission through Grants.gov for submissions for any succeeding calendar year. For example, if there is a competitive opportunity issued on December 1, 2015 with a submission deadline of January 15, 2016, the applicant would need a new exception to submit

through alternative methods beginning January 1, 2016.

Please note that the process described in this section is only for requesting alternate submission methods. All other inquiries about this announcement must be directed to the Agency Contact listed in Section VII of the announcement. Queries or requests submitted to the email address identified above for any reason other than to request an alternate submission method will not be acknowledged or answered.

B. Grants.gov Application Submission Instructions (see Appendix A).

Your organization's authorized official representative (AOR) must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later **Thursday, April 30, 2015 4:30 p.m. EDT**

C. Content of Application Package Submission

All application submissions, must contain completed and signed grant application forms, as well as a Narrative Proposal, as described below.

Grant Application Forms. Please be sure to include your organization's fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424. The required grant application forms are listed below and they are available at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/forms/forms.htm>.

- Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*
- Standard Form 424A, *Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs*
- Standard Form 424B, *Assurances for Non-Construction Programs*
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- EPA Form 5700-54-2 *Key Contacts Form for Multiple Principal Investigators*
- EPA Form 4700-4, *Pre-Award Compliance Review Report* EPA Form 5700-54, *Key Contacts Form*
- Narrative Proposal

Narrative Proposal. The **Narrative Proposal (including sections 1-3 below)** cannot exceed a maximum of 20 single-spaced typewritten pages, including the Summary Page. Supporting materials, such as resumes and letters of support, can be submitted as attachments and are not included in the 20-page limit.

1. **Summary Information Page** (recommended not to exceed one page)
 - a. Project Title
 - b. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address.
 - c. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA.

- d. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources, including cost share or in-kind resources.
- e. Project period. Provide beginning and ending dates. (Projects are anticipated to begin date and end no later than date.)

2. Narrative Proposal Work-Plan

The Narrative Proposal work-plan must explicitly describe how the proposed project meets the guidelines established in Sections I-III of this announcement, and must address each of the evaluation criteria set forth in Section V.

- a. **Project Summary/Approach:** This section should contain the following components:
 - i. Detailed project summary of how the project will address the priorities, objectives, and information contained in Section I of the announcement.
 - ii. Description of specific actions and methods to be undertaken and the responsible institutions, including estimated time line for each task.
 - iii. Description of the associated work products to be developed.
 - iv. Explanation of project benefits to the public, and specifically the potential audience(s) served.
 - v. Description of the roles of the applicant and partners, if any.
 - vi. Description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed project.
 - vii. Description of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.
 - viii. Budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task
 - ix. Description of how the project will address all of the EPA Strategic Plan goals. (see <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>)

Selected applicant(s) will need to submit a copy of their current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal cognizant agency.

b. Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs

Identify the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the project (**See Section I**), including what measurements will be used to track your progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and how the results of the project will be evaluated. Identify the expected project outputs and how progress towards achieving the expected outputs will be tracked and

measured.

c. **Past Performance**

Programmatic Capability: Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (**assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts**) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project and describe how you successfully performed and managed those agreements and your history of meeting reporting requirements under the agreements including submission of acceptable final technical reports. This may include past performance under agreements that involved addressing environmental finance issues, multi-media environmental challenges and solutions, and working cooperatively on such projects with other universities and non-profit entities.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the narrative proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

Reporting on Environmental Results--Outcomes and Outputs: Submit a list of federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (**assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts**) that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5) and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

In evaluating applicants under this factor in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the narrative proposal and you will receive a neutral score

for this factor under Section V. If you do not provide any response for this item, you may receive a score of 0 for this factor.

3. Detailed Budget Narrative

Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget found in the SF-424A. Applicants must itemize costs related to personnel, fringe benefits, contractual costs, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, indirect costs, and total costs.

Management Fees. When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

Voluntary cost share/match and leveraged funds (See Section III.B. also)

Demonstrate how you will leverage additional funds/resources beyond the grant funds awarded to support the proposed project activities and how these funds/resources will be used to contribute to the performance and success of the proposed project. This includes but is not limited to funds and other resources leveraged from businesses, labor organizations, non-profit organizations, education and training providers, and/or Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as appropriate. Describe the amount and type of leveraged resources to be provided, how you will obtain the leveraged resources, the likelihood the leveraging will materialize during grant performance, the strength of the leveraging commitment, and the role the leveraged resources will play to support the proposed project activities. Selected applicants are expected to abide by their proposed leveraging commitments during grant performance and the failure to do so may affect the legitimacy of the award.

4. Attachments. These are not included in the 20-page limit.

a. **Resumes.** Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.

b. **Support Letters.** Indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.

D. Additional Provisions For Applicants Incorporated Into The Solicitation:

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to confidential business information, contracts and sub-awards under grants, and proposal assistance and communications, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions.

E. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date and time for receipt of application submissions is **Thursday, April 30, 2015, 4:30 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)**. Electronic submissions via Grants.gov must be submitted to www.grants.gov by **Thursday, April 30, 2015, 4:30 pm Eastern Daylight (EDT)**. Applications submitted electronically after the closing date and time will not be considered for funding.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Only eligible entities whose application(s) meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the following six evaluation criterion set forth in this Section. Applicants should explicitly address all of these criteria as part of their application package submittal. Each application will be rated under a points system, with a total of 100 points possible.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
<p>1. <u>Project Summary/Approach:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the extent and quality to which the application and narrative proposal:</p> <p>(i) includes a well-conceived strategy for addressing all of the goals, objectives and requirements in Section I, Part B (Project Overview and Scope of Work) of this announcement (10points); and</p> <p>(ii) demonstrates how the proposed project will address the priorities listed in Section I, Part B (Project Overview and Scope of Work) (5 points).</p>	15
<p>2. <u>Environmental Results—Outcomes and Outputs:</u> Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate:</p> <p>(i) the effectiveness of the applicant’s plan for tracking and measuring its progress toward achieving expected project outputs and outcomes, including those identified in Section I, Part C (EPA Strategic Plan Linkage and Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes) of this announcement (5 points);</p> <p>(ii) the extent and quality to which the narrative proposal’s goals are realistic and will be actually implemented by project end (5 points); and</p> <p>(iii) whether the narrative proposal sets forth a reasonable time schedule for the execution of the tasks associated with the project(s) (5 points).</p>	15

Criteria	Points
<p>3. Past Performance--Programmatic Capability and Reporting on Environmental Results: Under this criterion, EPA will evaluate the applicant's technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's:</p> <p>(i) past performance in successfully completing and managing federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements* similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years including but not limited to environmental finance projects or similar projects in which the applicant worked in cooperation with other public and private non-profit universities and colleges and/or non-profit entities or for multimedia projects involving the financing of environmental protection activities for state, tribal, and local governments and/or the private sector (20 points); and</p> <p>(ii) history of meeting reporting requirements and submitting acceptable final technical reports under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements* similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years; and past performance in documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements* similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project within the last 3 years; and, if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not (10 points).</p> <p>NOTE: In evaluating applicants under this criterion, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance or reporting history will receive a neutral score for those elements under this criterion. A neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.</p> <p>* (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts)</p>	<p>30</p>

Criteria	Points
<p>4. <u>Staff Expertise/Qualifications:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors:</p> <p>(i) the applicant’s description of its staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project (15 points); and</p>	15
<p>5. <u>Budget/Resources:</u> Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the following factors:</p> <p>(i) whether the proposed project budget is appropriate to accomplish the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes and whether the budget provides an approximation of the percentage of the budget designated for each major activity (5 points); and</p> <p>(ii) whether the proposal demonstrates how the applicant will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non-Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and achieve stated goals, and how well EPA funding will complement activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. (10 points).</p>	15
<p>6. <u>Expenditure of Awarded Grant Funds:</u> Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their approach, procedures, and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. (10 points)</p>	10

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will first be evaluated against the threshold factors listed in Section III. Only those applications which meet all of the threshold factors will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria listed above **under Section V.A** by an EPA evaluation team. Each application will be given a numerical score and will be rank-ordered according to the numerical score. Funding recommendations will be provided to the Approving Official based on this ranking.

C. Other Factors

Final funding decisions will be made by the Approving Official based on the rankings and preliminary recommendation of the EPA evaluation team. In making the final funding decisions, the Approving Official may also consider programmatic priorities and geographic distribution of funds. Once final decisions have been made, a funding recommendation will be forwarded by the Approving Official's staff to the EPA Award Official.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

Following EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

1. EPA anticipates that notification to the *successful* applicant(s) will be made via telephone, e-mail or postal mail by **August 7, 2015**. The notification will advise the applicant that its proposed project has been successfully evaluated and recommended for award. The notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

This notification, which advises that the applicant's proposed project has been recommended for award, is **not** an authorization to begin performance. The award notice signed by the EPA grants officer is the authorizing document and will be provided through postal mail. At a minimum, this process can take up to 90 days from the date of recommendation. EPA Grant Award Officers are the only officials that can bind the Agency to the expenditure of funds for selected projects resulting from this announcement.

2. EPA anticipates notification to *unsuccessful* applicant(s) will be made via e-mail or postal mail by **August 7, 2015**. Notification will be sent to the original signer of the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. A listing and description of general EPA Regulations applicable to the award of assistance agreements may be viewed at: http://www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/applicable_epa_regulations_and_description.htm

2. Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the Initial Application and not all states require such a review.
3. All applicants applying for a Federal grant or cooperative agreement are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

C. Reporting Requirements

Quarterly or semiannual reports (as determined by the regional EPA project officer) and a detailed final technical report will be required. The quarterly or semiannual progress reports shall cover work status, work progress, any difficulties encountered, planned activities for next quarter or six months, and a summary of expenditures which shall include a comparison of the percentage of the project activities completed to the project schedule. The report shall also include any changes of key personnel concerned with the project. The schedule for the submission of quarterly or semiannual progress reports will be determined by EPA after the award.

The final technical report shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the completion of the period of performance. The final technical report should include: summary of the project or activity, advances achieved and costs of the project or activity. In addition, the final technical report shall discuss the problems, successes, and lessons learned from the project or activity that could help overcome structural, organizational or technical obstacles to implementing a similar project elsewhere.

D. Competition-Related Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Agency contact identified in Section VII of this solicitation.

Additional provisions that apply to this solicitation and/or awards made under this solicitation, including but not limited to those related to DUNS, SAM, copyrights, disputes, and administrative capability, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/solicitation_provisions.htm. These, and the other provisions that can be found at the website link, are important, and applicants must review them when preparing proposals for this solicitation. If you are unable to access these provisions electronically at the website above, please communicate with the EPA contact listed in this solicitation to obtain the provisions

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Using U.S. Postal Service First Class Mail

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ATTN: Timothy McProuty (Mail Code: 2731R)
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Center for Environmental Finance
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460**

Using Email

**efcgrant@epa.gov
ATTN: Timothy McProuty
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Center for Environmental Finance**

All questions or comments must be communicated in writing via postal mail, or e-mail to the contact person, **Timothy McProuty**, listed above. Questions, comments, and answers will be posted until the closing date of this announcement at the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's Center for Environmental Finance Grants/Funding webpage located on the EPA website at: <http://www2.epa.gov/envirofinance/efc-grant-competition.html>. For all questions and comments received by EPA pursuant to this notice, the goal will be to post the questions, comments, and answers on this website within 48 hours of receipt.

Appendix A. Grants.gov Submission Instructions **Grants.gov Application Instructions**

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information on the registration requirements

that must be completed in order to submit an application through grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then go to the “Get Registered” link on the page. If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible. Please note that the registration process also requires that your organization have a DUNS number and a current registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) and the process of obtaining both could take a month or more. Applicants must ensure that all registration requirements are met in order to apply for this opportunity through grants.gov and should ensure that all such requirements have been met well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration on grants.gov, SAM.gov, and DUNS number assignment is FREE.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Applicants” on the top of the page and then “Apply for Grants” from the drop down menu and then follow the instructions accordingly. Please note: To apply through grants.gov you must use Adobe Reader software and download the compatible Adobe Reader version. For more information about Adobe Reader, to verify compatibility, or to download the free software, please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>

You may also be able to access the application package for this announcement by searching for the opportunity on <http://www.grants.gov>. Go to <http://www.grants.gov> and then click on “Search Grants” at the top of the page and enter the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-OCFO-CEF-15, or CFDA 66.203, in the appropriate field and click the Search button. Alternatively, you may be able to access the application package by clicking on the Application Package button at the top right of the synopsis page for the announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. To find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click “Browse Agencies” in the middle of the page and then go to “Environmental Protection Agency” to find the EPA funding opportunities.

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete application package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **Thursday, April 30, 2015**. Please submit *all* of the application materials described below using the grants.gov application package that you downloaded using the instructions above. For additional instructions on completing and submitting the electronic application package, click on the “Show Instructions” tab that is accessible within the application package itself.

Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required under this announcement:

Mandatory Documents:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Grants.gov Lobbying Form
5. EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
6. EPA Form 4700-4 – Pre-award Compliance Review Report
7. Narrative Proposal (Project Narrative Attachment Form)-prepared as described in Section IV.B of the announcement

Optional Documents:

1. Other Attachment - biographical Sketch. Provide resumes or curriculum vitae for all principal investigators and any other key personnel.
2. Other Attachments form - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
3. Other Attachments form - Quality Assurance Narrative Statement.
4. Other Attachments form - Support Letters - These should indicate how the supporting organization will assist in the project.
5. Other Attachments

If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact Timothy McProuty at efcgrant@epa.gov.

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically.